

upper edifice of the church was constructed and stands today as a monument of faith and spiritual enrichment to both the church membership and the Gary community.

Over the years, the church has experienced some changes and was led by a variety of pastors. In spite of its many changes, the loyal parishioners continued to grow and prosper. On June 24, 1994, the Reverend O.C. Comer was appointed pastor of Bethlehem A.M.E. Zion Church. Under Reverend Comer's guidance, the church has started two new ministries including the Bus Ministry and the Street Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating the parish family of Bethlehem African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, under the guidance of Reverend O.C. Comer, as they prepare to celebrate their 84th anniversary. All past and present parishioners and pastors should be proud of the numerous contributions they have made with love and devotion for their church throughout the past 84 years.

TRIBUTE TO THE LITTLE ROCK
NINE AND MRS. DAISY BATES

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 9, 1999

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, as we honor today the Little Rock Nine with the Congressional Medal of Honor, I would also like to pay tribute to Daisy Bates, who passed from this Earth last week. Ms. Bates was a mentor to the Little Rock Nine during the Central High School desegregation crisis in 1957. She was a true leader of our time.

Daisy Bates was a participant in a movement that changed history forever. Those young people and Daisy Bates became symbols to all of us of what it means to be courageous, honorable and exceptionally brave. Daisy Bates was a great mentor who had the courage to stand up for what she believed in. Mrs. Bates was a courageous woman under all circumstances and she will be greatly missed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 9, 1999

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, on November 8, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 574, 575, and 576. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on H. Res. 94, Recognizing the Generous Contributions Made by Each Living Person; "yes" on H.R. 2904, to Amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to Reauthorize Funding for the Office of Government Ethics, and "yes" on H. Res. 344, Recognizing and Honoring Payne Stewart and Expressing the Condolences of the House of Representatives to His Family on His Death.

HONORING AMERICA'S ARMED
SERVICES DURING THE HOLIDAYS

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 9, 1999

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a spectacular rendition of the timeless holiday tale, "Twas the Night Before Christmas." This holiday season I encourage all of us to remember the men and women of our country's armed services who work twenty-four-hours a day, seven days a week to guarantee our safety and the safety of our beloved children. May they know how much we appreciate their sacrifices for freedom.

'Twas THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
(By an American Marine stationed in
Okinawa, Japan)

'Twas the night before Christmas,
he lived all alone,
in a one bedroom house made of
plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney
with presents to give,
and to see just who
in this home did live.

I looked all about,
a strange sight I did see,
no tinsel, no presents,
not even a tree.

No stocking by mantel,
just boots filled with sand,
on the wall hung pictures
of far distant lands.

With medals and badges,
awards of all kinds,
a sober thought
came through my mind.

For this house was different,
it was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier,
one I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping,
slent, alone,
curled up on the floor
in this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,
the room in such disorder,
now how I pictured
a United States soldier.

Was this the hero
of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho,
the floor for a bed?

I realized the families
that I saw this night,
owed their lives to these soldiers
who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world,
the children would play,
and grown-ups would celebrate
a bright Christmas day.

They all enjoyed freedom
each month of the year,
because of the soldiers,
like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder
how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas eve
in a land far from home.

The very thought
brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees
and started to cry.

The soldier awakened
and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa don't cry,
this life is my choice;

I fight for freedom,
I don't ask for more,
my life is my god,
my country, my Corps."

The soldier rolled over
and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it,
I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours,
so silent and still
and we both shivered
from the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave
on that cold, dark, night,
this guardian of honor
so willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over,
with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "carry on Santa,"
it's Christmas Day, all is secure."

One look at my watch,
and I knew he was right
"Merry Christmas my friend,
and to all a good night."

IN HONOR OF THE UKRAINIAN
BANDURIST CHORUS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 9, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus on their 50th Anniversary in America. The Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus is an all-male musical ensemble consisting of 20 instrumentalists and vocalists. The chorus was originally founded in Kyiv, Ukraine in 1918. The ensemble relocated in Detroit, Michigan in 1949. This internationally recognized ensemble has performed at such well-known theaters as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Bolshoi Theater, and Massey Hall. In addition, the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus has entertained many world figures and personalities with their exciting programs of folk songs, religious works and the exotic sounds of the bandura.

Three generations of members have passed through the ranks of the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus since its displacement from Ukraine in 1942. In addition to its mission of carrying the tradition of the bandura to the 21st century, the Chorus is also charged with preserving its past for future generations. The history of the Ukraine Bandurist Chorus can be traced directly to the 12th Archeological Congress in Kharkiv, Ukraine in 1902. The first professional bandurist chorus was formed in Kyiv in 1918 during the height of the country's brief period of independence. During a time of increased popularity and resurgence of the Ukrainian arts and culture, the group developed into a professional touring group. Following this time of heightened regard, the Chorus' history evolved into a turbulent one. The bandurist ideal of God, truth, freedom, and human dignity herald through song were under attack by the newly formed Soviet Union. As a result many of the original members of the Ukrainian bandurist Chorus were executed. After years of persecution and exploitation the Chorus was forced to immigrate to Detroit. During a time of devastation and uncertainty, Hryhory Kytasty, the long standing director acted as a role model and inspiration to the young bandurists. Kytasty worked hard